

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

A DELIVERY APPARATUS FOR FOLDING MACHINES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates generally to a delivery apparatus for folding machines for forming signatures by selectively changing over a straight run for cutting a paper web into cut-length sheets of a predetermined length and sequentially folding the cut-length sheets in a folding apparatus, and a collect run for overlapping two sheets of the cut-length sheets in the folding apparatus and subsequently folding the two overlapped sheets, then placing the formed signatures onto an in-service conveyor via a delivery fly to deliver the signatures in a state where the forward face of the signatures is caused to feather, or to be offset overlapped, and more particularly to a folding machine for allowing signatures to be discharged by making the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the straight run the same as the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the collect run where the number of signatures to be formed is half, for example, as many as the number of signatures to be formed in the straight run.

2. Description of the Related Art

[0002] A conventional type of delivery apparatus for folding machines having the aforementioned construction as disclosed in Japanese Published Unexamined Patent Application No. 2000-185858 is publicly known. The prior-art delivery apparatus for folding machines disclosed in that Patent Application has a variable gear-ratio gear drive provided between a drive gear operating in conjunction with a folding apparatus and a drive shaft of a discharge conveyor, in which the gear ratio of the gear drive is changed in accordance with the changeover from a straight run mode to a collect run

mode so as to change only the operating speed of the conveyor with respect to the operating speed of the folding apparatus, that is, so as to make only the operating speed of the conveyor slower with respect to the operating speed of the folding apparatus when changing over to the collect run, so that signatures can be delivered with the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the straight run made equal to the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the collect run.

[0003] Heretofore, signatures formed in the folding apparatus are placed on the conveyor via the delivery fly in such a manner that a succeeding signature is placed on the conveyor after moved at the operating speed of the delivery fly to a position where the succeeding signature overlaps a preceding signature that has been placed on the conveyor offset by a predetermined distance. Consequently, the portion of the succeeding signature that runs off the receiving area of the delivery fly tends to be unwantedly moved while coming in contact with the preceding signature that has been previously placed on the conveyor earlier.

[0004] In the prior art disclosed in Japanese Published Unexamined Patent Application No. 2000-185858, the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the collect run is made equal to the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the straight run by making the operating speed of the conveyor slower while the operating speed of the delivery fly for transferring the signatures received from the folding apparatus to an appropriate position on the conveyor is kept matched with the operating speed of the folding apparatus. This construction could cause the following problem. That is, as the succeeding signature that has been moving at the operating speed of the delivery fly are placed on the conveyor in an uncontrolled state and is now moved while coming in contact with the preceding signature that is moving at the operating speed of the conveyor, the preceding signature is forced to move together with the succeeding signature, causing a large deviation in the feathered overlap pitch. This may result in

troubles in handling the signatures with handling means on the downstream side, such as failure to grip the signatures one by one with the grip transfer device.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is an object of the present invention to provide a delivery apparatus for folding machines which can change over operating speed ratios of the folding apparatus and the delivery fly by changing over gear ratios of the gear drive via changeover means, so that signatures can be delivered in a state where the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the straight run is equal to the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the collect run.

[0006] It is another object of the present invention to provide a folding apparatus in which signatures can be delivered in a state where the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the straight run is equal to the feathered overlap pitch of the signatures in the collect run.

[0007] It is a further object of the present invention to provide a gear drive that can change over from the straight run to the collect run.

[0008] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide positive-motion changeover means having a simple construction and capable of easily changing over gear ratios of the gear drive.

[0009] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide a conveyor that is caused to rotate at a predetermined speed ratio with respect to the delivery fly at any time.

[0010] It is still a further object of the present invention to provide a delivery fly for receiving and discharging signatures that have been folded in the folding apparatus to the conveyor.

[0011] In the disclosed embodiment, the delivery apparatus for folding machines having a folding apparatus and a delivery apparatus comprises a delivery fly for receiving signatures that have been folded in the folding apparatus, a conveyor operating at a predetermined speed ratio with respect to the delivery fly for receiving the signatures from the delivery fly, a gear drive having a plurality of gear ratios and provided between the folding apparatus and the delivery fly for transmitting power to the delivery fly, changeover means capable of selectively changing over gear ratios of the gear drive, so that the operating speed of the delivery fly can be set to a plurality of stages with respect to the operating speed of the folding apparatus.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a partially cross-sectional development illustrating the construction of an embodiment of the gear drive and the changeover means of the delivery apparatus according to the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a view taken in the direction of an arrow A of the changeover means in the embodiment shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a schematic block diagram showing an outline of a folding machine to which the present invention can be applied.

FIG. 4 is an enlarged diagram of assistance in explaining major parts of the folding apparatus and the delivery apparatus shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the straight run.

FIG. 6 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the straight run, continued from FIG. 5.

FIG. 7 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the straight run, continued from FIG. 6.

FIG. 8 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the straight run, continued from FIG. 7.

FIG. 9 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run.

FIG. 10 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run, continued from FIG. 9.

FIG. 11 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run, continued from FIG. 10.

FIG. 12 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run, continued from FIG. 11.

FIG. 13 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run, continued from FIG. 12.

FIG. 14 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run, continued from FIG. 13.

FIG. 15 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run, continued from FIG. 14.

FIG. 16 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run, continued from FIG. 15.

FIG. 17 is a diagram of assistance in explaining the operation of the present invention in the collect run, continued from FIG.16.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0013] Now, embodiments of the present invention will be described, referring to the accompanying drawings.

[0014] In FIGS. 1 and 2, a folding machine F comprises a former F, a folding apparatus FA, and a delivery apparatus DA. The folding apparatus FA has two folding

rollers FD and FD provided facing a cutting cylinder CC and a folding cylinder FC. The cutting cylinder CC has two cutting blades B1 and B2 provided at equal intervals on the outer circumferential surface of the cutting cylinder CC, whereas the folding cylinder FC has three cutting blade rests BR, BR and BR provided at equal intervals on the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder FC, three pins N1, N2 and N3 provided in such a manner as to be protruded from or retracted below the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder FC on the upstream side in the rotational direction of the folding cylinder FC in the vicinity of the cutting blade rests BR, BR and BR, and two tucker blades TB1 and TB2 supported by a tucker-blade support member H that makes a half-turn at every 1/3-turn, for example, of the folding cylinder FC. The tucker-blade support member H is provided coaxially on a cylinder shaft 10 of the folding cylinder FC in such a manner that the tucker blades TB1 and TB2 are protruded from the outer circumferential surface of the fold cylinder FC and inserted in between the folding rollers FD and FD. The circumferential length ratio between the cutting cylinder CC and the folding cylinder FC is 2:3.

[0015] The delivery apparatus DA has a delivery fly 3, a discharge conveyor C, a gear drive 1 having a plurality of gear ratios, which will be described later with reference to FIGS. 3 and 4, for transmitting power from the folding apparatus FA to the delivery fly 3, and changeover means 2 that can selectively change over the gear ratios of the gear drive 1.

[0016] The gear drive 1 and the changeover means 2 have such a construction as shown in FIGS. 3 and 4.

[0017] That is, the gear drive 1 comprises a gear 11 provided on an end of the cylinder shaft 10 of the folding cylinder FC on the side protruding toward the outer surface of a frame F3, in such a manner as to be rotatable as the folding apparatus FA is driven, a gear 12 provided rotatably with respect to a first intermediate shaft 10a and

engaged with the gear 11, a gear 13 provided rotatably and integrally with the gear 12 with respect to the first intermediate shaft 10a, a gear 14 provided rotatably with respect to the first intermediate shaft 10a and engaged with the gear 13, gears 15 and 16 provided rotatably and integrally with respect to a second intermediate shaft 10b and also rotatably and integrally with each other, a gear 17 provided on an end of the delivery fly shaft 30 of the delivery fly 3 on the side protruding toward the outer surface of the frame F3, in such a manner as to be rotatable with respect to a delivery fly shaft 30, and engaged with the gear 15, and a gear 18 provided rotatably with respect to the delivery fly shaft 30 between the gear 17 and the frame F3 on the delivery fly shaft 30 on the side protruding toward the outer surface of the frame F3; the gear ratio being set so that the number of rotation transmitted to the gear 18 via the gear 16 equals to half of the number of rotation transmitted to the gear 17 via the gear 15.

[0018] The changeover means 2 comprises a changeover clutch provided on the delivery fly shaft 30 between the gear 17 and the gear 18. On the mutually facing side surfaces of the gear 17 and the gear 18 rotatably provided are a tooth clutch 27 and a tooth clutch 28, with a clutch tooth 27a and a clutch tooth 28a facing each other in such a manner as to be rotatable integrally with the gear 17 or 18, and a double-sided tooth clutch 26 having a clutch tooth 26a on a surface facing the tooth clutch 27 and a clutch tooth 26c on a surface facing the tooth clutch 28 is provided on the delivery fly shaft 30 between the tooth clutch 27 and the tooth clutch 28 in such a manner as to be constrained in the direction of rotation with respect to the delivery fly shaft 30 and axially movable via a sliding key 29. The gap between the clutch tooth 27a of the tooth clutch 27 and the clutch tooth 28a of the tooth clutch 28 is larger in size than the distance from the tip of the clutch tooth 26a of the double-sided tooth clutch 26 to the tip of the clutch tooth 26c, and is such that when any of the clutch tooth 26a or 26c is fully

in mesh with the facing clutch tooth 27a or 28a, the tooth top of the counterpart clutch tooth 26a or 26c has a gap with the tooth top of the facing clutch tooth 27a or 28a.

[0019] A roller groove 26b is provided on the outer circumferential surface at the axially intermediate part of the double-sided tooth clutch 26. A shaft 23 that is angularly movable with respect to bifurcated bearings 20a and 20a that rise on a free end of an L-shaped bracket 20 provided on the frame F3 is provided on the bifurcated bearings 20a and 20a in a right-angle and twisted positional relations with the delivery fly shaft 30. An end of an arm 22 is mounted on the intermediate part of the shaft 23, and shifter arms 24 and 24 are on both ends thereof, both integrally with the shaft 23 and in such a manner as to make an angular movement. The other end of the arm 22 is connected via a knuckle 21b and a pin 21a to an output rod of a changeover actuator 21, which is a pneumatic cylinder, for example, mounted on the frame F3 in an appropriate manner. On the other ends each of the shifter arms 24 and 24 rotatably provided is a roller 25 that is disposed in the aforementioned roller groove 26b provided on the double-sided tooth clutch 26. The telescopic movement of the output rod of the changeover actuator 21 causes the double-sided tooth clutch 26 to reciprocate in the axial direction of the delivery fly shaft 30. This reciprocating movement simultaneously accomplishes engagements of the clutch tooth 26a and the clutch tooth 27a, and of the clutch tooth 26c and the clutch tooth 28a at the intermediate position of the reciprocating movement. As a result, no changes are brought about in the phase relationship between the folding cylinder FC and the delivery fly 3 in drive shifting via the changeover means 2 despite the unconstrained rotation of the gear 17 and the gear 18 with respect to the delivery fly shaft 30. S1 is a signature. Pinss to say, shifting of the drive power via the changeover means 2 is accomplished while the folding machine F is stopped.

[0020] The discharge conveyor C is driven by the power transmitted by a delivery fly sprocket 32 provided on the delivery fly shaft 30, a conveyor sprocket C1 provided on

an appropriate rotating shaft of the conveyor C, and an endless chain C2 connecting the sprocket 32 and the conveyor sprocket C1, and caused to rotate at a predetermined speed rate together with the delivery fly 3 at all times.

[0021] In the embodiment described above, particularly with reference to FIGS. 1 and 2, the paper web Pa is slit into half at the across-the-width center thereof in the direction parallel to the travel direction by a slitter SL immediately before a former FM. Each of the slit pieces is folded in the former FM into a longitudinally folded paper web Pa1. The longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 is passed through a nipping roller NR1 immediately downstream of the former FM and a nipping roller NR2 upstream of the folding apparatus FA, and guided in between the cutting cylinder CC and the folding cylinder FC, both provided in parallel adjacent with each other and rotating in opposite directions. The cutting cylinder CC and the folding cylinder FC of the folding apparatus FA are such that the folding cylinder FC makes a 1/3 rotation at every 1/2 rotation of the cutting cylinder CC to cut to a predetermined length the longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 guided in between the cutting cylinder CC and the folding cylinder FC through collaborating action caused as a cutting blade B1 or B2 of the cutting cylinder CC bites into a blade rest BR of the folding cylinder FC, producing cut-length sheets Pb1, Pb2 and Pb3. Before the longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 is cut by the cutting blade B1 or B2 of the cutting cylinder CC and the blade rest BR of the folding cylinder FC, the pins N1, N2 and N3 located on the upstream side in the rotational direction in the vicinity of the blade rest BR of the folding cylinder FC stick the longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 on the upstream side in the vicinity of the cut-off position to hold the area near the cut-off position of the longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 on the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder FC.

[0022] When operating the folding machine F in the straight run mode, the folding machine F is set while not in motion, so that both the tucker blades TB1 and TB2

of the folding cylinder FC can be protruded from the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder during the operation of the folding machine F, and the output rod of the changeover actuator 21 of the changeover means 2 described in FIGS. 3 and 4 is retracted to shift the double-sided tooth clutch 26 to the side of the gear 17, so that the gear drive 1 is changed over to a state where the clutch tooth 26a is in mesh with the clutch tooth 27a. The folding machine F is put into operation in the aforementioned state.

[0023] As shown in FIGS. 5 through 8, the pins N1, N2 and N3 sequentially stick the longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 on the upstream side in the vicinity of the cut-off position in the vicinity of the position where the folding cylinder FC and the cutting cylinder CC come very close to and face each other, then the cutting blades B1 and B2 of the cutting cylinder CC sequentially bite into the blade rest BR of the folding cylinder FC at the position where the folding cylinder FC and the cutting cylinder CC come very close to and face each other to cut the longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 at the cut-off position, sequentially producing the cut-length sheets Pb1, Pb2 and Pb3 on the downstream side in the rotational direction. The pins N1, N2 and N3 retract into the folding cylinder FC at every one rotation at a position where the folding cylinder FC goes ahead of the cutting cylinder CC by one-third in the rotational direction of the folding cylinder FC from the position where the folding cylinder FC and the cutting cylinder CC come very close and face each other, sequentially releasing the cut-length sheets Pb1, Pb2 and Pb3 that have been held thereby. Simultaneously with the sequential release of the cut-length sheets Pb1, Pb2 and Pb3 by the pins N1, N2 and N3, the tucker blades TB1 and TB2 protrude from the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder FC, sequentially pushing the intermediate parts of the cut-length sheets Pb1, Pb2 and Pb3 that adhere to the outer surface of the folding cylinder FC in between the folding rollers FD and FD provided in parallel with each other in the vicinity of the downstream side of

the folding cylinder FC. The folding rollers FD and FD nip the intermediate part of the cut-length sheets Pb1, Pb2 and Pb3 forced therebetween to produce creases, and release the cut-length sheets Pb1, Pb2 and Pb3 as signatures S1, S2 and S3, with the creases taking the lead, toward the delivery fly 3 provided on the downstream side of the folding rollers FD and FD.

[0024] The delivery fly 3 is such that a plurality of (four, for example) small-diameter discs having a plurality of (six in the figure) blades 31 almost tangentially extending outward from equally spaced outer circumferential positions are mounted at appropriate intervals in the axial direction of the delivery fly 3 with the phases of blades 31 matched with each other, and that the delivery fly is caused to rotate (by a factor of the number of blades installed at every 1/3 turn of the folding cylinder) so that the signature receiving areas between the adjoining blades 31 and 31 on the circumferential surface of the delivery fly 3 sequentially come facing the intermediate area between the folding rollers FD and FD every time the folding rollers FD and FD release the signatures S1, S2 and S3 as a result of the changeover of drive power by the changeover means 2, and the adjoining signature receiving areas on the circumferential surface of the delivery fly 3 sequentially receive the signatures S1, S2 and S3 released by the folding rollers FD and FD.

[0025] The delivery fly 3 that sequentially receive the signatures S1, S2 and S3 on the signature receiving areas thereof continues rotation, pushes the signatures S1, S2 and S3 out of the signature receiving areas via stoppers (not shown) provided at appropriate positions between the small-diameter discs having the blades 31, ---. The signatures S1, S2 and S3 pushed out of the signature receiving areas of the delivery fly 3 are then received on the transfer surface of the discharge conveyor C provided below the delivery fly 3, discharged to the outside of the folding machine F in the form of a signature train Sa (see FIGS. 1 and 2) which is formed by the signatures shifted by a

predetermined overlap pitch P determined taking into account the rotational speed of the delivery fly 3 and the transfer speed of the conveyor C, and handled by a device on the downstream side, such as a grab transfer device that grabs for transfer the signatures S1, S2 and S3 one by one.

[0026] Next, when operating the folding machine F in the collect run mode, the folding machine F, which is not in motion, is set by any appropriate means, so that any one of the tucker blades TB1 and TB2 of the folding cylinder FC can protrude from the outer circumferential surface while the machine is in motion, the double-sided tooth clutch 26 is shifted to the side of the gear 18 by extending the output rod of the changeover actuator 21 of the changeover means 2, so that the gear drive 1 is changed over to a state where the clutch tooth 26c is in mesh with the clutch tooth 28a. Suppose here that the paper web Pa that runs to the folding machine F contains alternately arranged printed images x and y of different sizes that can match with the sizes of the cut-length sheets Pb1, Pb2 and Pb3. Now, the folding machine F can be operated in the aforementioned state.

[0027] As shown in FIGS. 9 through 17, the pins N1, N2 and N3 sequentially stick the longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 at the upstream side near the cutting position as the pins N1, N2 and N3 approach to the position where the cutting cylinder CC comes very close to and faces the folding cylinder FC. The cutting blades B1 and B2 of the cutting cylinder CC then sequentially bite into the blade rest BR of the folding cylinder FC to cut the longitudinally folded paper web Pa1 at the cutting position, sequentially producing cut-length sheets Pb1x, Pb2y, Pb3x, Pb1y, Pb2x, and Pb3y on the downstream side in the rotational direction. At a position 1/3-rotation ahead in the rotational direction of the folding cylinder FC from the position where the cutting cylinder CC comes very close to and faces the folding cylinder FC, the pins N1, N2 and N3 retract into the folding cylinder FC at every two rotations. Consequently, the pins

N1, N2 and N3 are such that the pin N1 holds the cut-length sheets Pb1x and Pb1y in overlapped state on the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder FC, the pin N2 holds the cut-length sheets Pb2x and Pb2y in overlapped state on the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder FC, and the pin N3 holds the cut-length sheets Pb3x and Pb3y in overlapped state on the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder FC. The pins N1, N2 and N3 then sequentially release cut-length sheets Pb1xy, Pb2xy and Pb3xy that have been held in two-fold state. Consequently, any of the pin N1, N2 and N3 that advances to a position $1/3$ -rotation ahead in the rotational direction of the folding cylinder FC from the position where the cutting cylinder CC comes very close to and faces the folding cylinder FC retracts into the folding cylinder FC in the order of N1, N2 and N3, for example at every $2/3$ -rotation of the folding cylinder FC, with the result that the cut-length sheets Pb1xy, Pb3xy and Pb2xy held by the pins N1, N2 and N3 are released in the order described above. Simultaneously with the release of the two-fold cut-length sheets Pb1xy, Pb3xy and Pb2xy, any one, TB1, for example, of the tucker blades TB1 and TB2 protrudes from the outer circumferential surface of the folding cylinder FC to sequentially tuck the two-fold Pb1xy, Pb3xy and Pb2xy at the intermediate part thereof in the rotational direction of the folding cylinder FC in between the folding rollers FD and FD provided in the vicinity and in parallel with the downstream side of the folding cylinder FC (see FIG. 13 (B), a partially enlarged diagram of Pb1xy, FIG. 15 (B), a partially enlarged diagram of Pb3xy, and FIG. 17 (B), a partially enlarged diagram of Pb2xy). The folding rollers FD and FD nip the intermediate parts of the cut-length sheets Pb1xy, Pb3xy and Pb2xy inserted therebetween to form creases and release as the signatures S1, S2 and S3, while causing the creases to lead the way, towards the delivery fly 3 provided on the downstream side of the folding rollers FD and FD (the signatures S1 and S2 are such as shown in FIG. 14 (B) which is a partially enlarged view of S1 and FIG. 16 (B) which is a partially enlarged

view of S2). Consequently, the release of the signatures S1, S2 and S3 by the folding rollers FD and FD in the collect run amounts to half as much as the release of the signatures S1, S2 and S3 by the folding rollers FD and FD in the straight run.

[0028] The delivery fly 3 having the same construction as that described with reference to the straight run is such that the rotational speed ratio with respect to the rotational speed of the folding cylinder FC is changed over to half of the rotational speed ratio in the case of the straight run through drive power changeover by the changeover means 2 for changing over the gear drive 1 to a state where the clutch tooth 26c is in mesh with the clutch tooth 28a, is caused to rotate so that the signature receiving areas between the adjoining blades 31 and 31 on the circumferential positions of the delivery fly 3 sequentially come facing the intermediate area between the folding rollers FD and FD every time the folding rollers FD and FD release the signatures S1, S2 and S3 (that is, caused to rotate by a fraction of the number of blades 31 installed at every $\frac{2}{3}$ rotation of the folding cylinder FC), and sequentially receive the signatures S1, S2, S3, --
- released by the folding rollers FD and FD.

[0029] The delivery fly 3 that sequentially receive the signatures S1, S2 and S3 on the signature receiving areas thereof continues rotation, pushes the signatures out of the signature receiving areas via stoppers (not shown) provided at appropriate positions between the small-diameter discs having the blades 31, ---. The signatures S1, S2 and S3 pushed out of the signature receiving areas of the delivery fly 3 are then received on the transfer surface of the discharge conveyor C provided below the delivery fly 3, forming a signature train Sa (see FIGS. 1 and 2) which is formed by the signatures shifted by a predetermined feathered overlap pitch P determined taking into account the rotational speed of the delivery fly 3 and the transfer speed of the conveyor C. In this case, no significant variations are caused in the feathered overlap pitch P because the preceding signature is hardly moved appreciably along with the succeeding signature

even when the succeeding signature comes in contact with the preceding signature. This is partly because the speed ratio between the rotational speed of the delivery fly 3 and the transfer speed of the conveyor C is the same as that in the straight run, the overlap pitch P becomes equal to that in the straight run, and partly because the conditions for forming the feathered overlap pitch P are the same as those in the straight run. The signature train Sa on the transfer surface of the conveyor C is transferred to the outside of the folding machine F by the conveyor C, and handled by a device on the downstream side, such as a grab transfer device for sequentially transferring the signatures S1, S2 and S3 one by one.

[0030] As described above, the present invention, which makes the operating speed of the delivery fly in the collect run half of the operating speed of the delivery fly in the straight run, as described above with reference to an embodiment, and makes the speed ratio between the operating speed of the delivery fly and the operating speed of the conveyor in the collect run the same as the speed ratio between the operating speed of the delivery fly and the operating speed of the conveyor in the straight run in making the feathered overlap pitch of signatures in the collect run the same as the feathered overlap pitch of signatures in the straight run, can eliminate a large amount of deviation in the feathered overlap pitch of signatures since a preceding signature is kept from being shifted to a great extent, together with a succeeding signature even when the succeeding signature moving at the operating speed of the delivery fly is placed on the conveyor in an unrestricted state and caused to move while in contact with the preceding signature moving at the operating speed of the conveyor. Thus, troubles in handling signatures by the downstream handling means due to a large amount of offset in the feathered overlap pitch of signatures can be prevented.